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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/698,489	10/26/2000	Van L. Phillips	FLEXFT.146CP2	6577

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EXAMINER

JACKSON, SUZETTE JAMIE

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3738

DATE MAILED: 01/30/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.	09/698,489	Applicant(s)	PHILLIPS ET AL.
Examiner	Jackson J Suzette	Art Unit	3738

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 December 2002.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1,7,10 and 62-78 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1, 7, 62-63, 65-71, 73-78 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) 10,64 and 72 is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
 If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
 a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 14.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. Applicant's amendment and terminal disclaimer dated 18 December 2002 have been received in application serial number 09/698,489. Claims 11-12 and 15-61 have been canceled.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1, 7, 62-63, 66-71, 73-78 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Merlette 4,959,073. Merlette discloses the invention as claimed (noting figures 1, 6 and 7) a foot plate element (20); at least one ankle plate element disposed above the foot plate element (14); and at least one ankle block positioned between the ankle plate element (24); the ankle block including at least one cylindrical opening (28) extending at least partially through the ankle block; a stiffener element (30) capable of being removed; wherein the foot plate has a curvilinear shape (see figure 21).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claim 65 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Merlette.

Merlette has been disclosed above noting element (24). However Merlette does not specify that the ankle block is urethane but Merlette does state in col. 4, line 11 that element 24 is rubber. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made that the flexible rubber is urethane because it is known for its flexing properties.

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 10, 64, and 27 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Harrington 2,357,893 and Cooper et al. 4,721,510 show related material.

Conclusion

8. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Suzette J. Jackson whose work schedule is Monday-Friday 9-6:30 off every other Friday and whose telephone number is 703-308-6516.

10. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-305-3580.

11. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0858.



Suzette J. Jackson
23 January 2003



David H. Willse
Primary Examiner